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ABSTRACT

A survey of 65 newspaper editors and 64 television news directors was conducted to examine policies concerning unnamed sources and unattributed information in news stories, and to measure the effects of the incident in which a "Washington Post" reporter fabricated a major story and claimed that she had granted her sources confidentiality. The results indicated that 24% of the newspapers and television stations had formal written policies regarding the use of anonymous sources in stories, and 71% had only informal oral policies regarding the use of such sources. The major rules of the policies included (1) providing editors with source names; (2) using anonymous sources as a last resort; (3) verifying anonymous information through other sources; (4) describing such sources as much as possible to allow audiences to assess credibility; (5) granting confidentiality only to protect a source's life, liberty, property, or profession; and (6) using such sources only when they represented official government organizations. More newspapers than television stations demanded that editors know the identity of confidential sources, used them only as a last resort, and described them as fully as possible. Almost half of the respondents indicated that the "Washington Post" incident had no real effect on their news gathering and reporting activities. (HTH)

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The Use of Anonymous Sources and Related Ethical Concerns in Journalism: A Comparison of the Effects of the Janet Cooke/"Washington Post" Incident On the Policies and Practices of Large Newspapers and Television Stations

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One of the several questions of journalistic ethics connected with the Janet Cooke/"Washington Post" incident concerns the use of unnamed sources and unattributed information. Much has been written about the incident and the purposes of attributing information in news stories. This study reviews some of the published commentary and research about the Janet Cooke case and the use of unnamed sources. This study also examines the current practices and policies of newspapers and television stations regarding the use of anonymous sources in news stories.

College and university textbooks on journalistic writing and reporting usually advise complete source identification unless it is absolutely necessary to protect the source's identity for some reason.[1] The textbooks also stress the importance of named sources in building credibility.

Textbooks on journalistic ethics and responsibility also advise complete source identification whenever possible. Rivers and Schramm suggest that one of the most important services a news medium can provide is to cite clearly the sources of its information and the authors urge reporters to fight to get everything "on-the-record."[2]

John Hulteng reports that without adequate identification of the sources of information and opinion in stories, readers/viewers have no basis for judging whether the information is trustworthy.[3] He notes there are times when such identification is not possible, but a story is incomplete without it.

Hulteng also finds that quoting an anonymous spokesman is sometimes the only way to get information to the public, but it can often lead to

reporting distorted, self-serving information.[4] He warns that reporters should always attempt to verify information obtained from sources who want to remain anonymous.

Bruce Swain acknowledges that granting confidentiality to sources can be useful at times, but it can also lead to conveying misinformation or to suppressing news.[5] He writes that readers/viewers have no way of gauging the credibility of information if sources are not named.

Most of the major journalistic codes of ethics make some mention of the importance of naming sources.

> Pledges of confidentiality to news sources must be honored at all costs, and therefore should not be given lightly. Unless there is clear and pressing need to maintain confidences, sources of information should be identified.
>
> American Society of Newspaper Editors
> "Statement of Principles"

> News sources should be disclosed unless there is clear reason not to do so. When it is necessary to protect the confidentiality of a source the reason should be explained.
>
> Associated Press Managing Editors
> "Association Code of Ethics"

> So-called news communications from private sources should not be published or broadcast without substantiation of their claims to news value. Journalists acknowledge the newsman's ethic of protecting confidential sources of information.
>
> Society of Professional Journalists,SDX
> "Code of Ethics"

> Those responsible for news on radio should exercise constant professional care in the selection of sources--on the premise that the integrity of the news and the consequent good reputation of radio as a dominant well-balanced news medium depend largely upon the reliability of such sources.
>
> National Association of Broadcasters
> "Radio Code"

Most of the newspaper, magazine and journal articles on the Janet Cooke/"Washington Post" incident bemoan the continuing loss of public confidence in press credibility, caution against the overuse of anonymous sources and the careless treatment of "facts" and suggest that editors and reporters review or develop rigorous standards for granting confidentiality to sources.[6]

To support a perceived declining public trust in journalism and journalists, "Newsweek" reports a Gallup Poll conducted in late April, 1981, showed only 38% of the respondents rated journalists high on honesty and ethics.[7] About 61% believed little or very little of what is reported by the news media. About 33% believed reporters "often make things up."

"U.S. News & World Report" sees an erosion of press credibility being fed by the spreading use of anonymous sources.[8] It cites a series of ABC/Harris Polls which showed a fluctuating, but clearly declining number of Americans who have "great confidence" in television news or newspapers. Television news did inspire more confidence than newspapers, though.

Cynthia Bolbach, managing editor of "Media Law Reporter," also cites

the eroding public confidence in the press and blames it, in part, on the overuse of "confidential sources."[9] She speculates such use is often an effort to indicate to readers or viewers that a story is "hot" and a potential prize winner.

Bolbach warns that continued overuse of anonymous sources can lead journalists to abandon their ethical responsibilities and can undermine the legitimate use of such sources as a journalistic tool. Others also see the the legal rights of reporters to keep sources confidential being jeopardized by such overuse.[10]

James Michener laments the weakening of the"central pillar" of the profession of journalism--integrity.[11] He calls for more rigorous verification of information and more restricted use of anonymous sources.

Norman Isaacs, the chairman of the National News Council, agrees with Michener. Isaacs says it is impossible for the public to determine the credibility of sources if journalists don't provide names or some other recognizable source identification.[12] He blames "lazy" reporters for the overuse of anonymous sources and suggests that instead of taking the "easy way out" and quoting unnamed sources, reporters should ask where the source got his information and then go there to dig into documents and question other sources. Reporters who overuse anonymous sources, Isaacs says, deceive the public, lower the profession of journalism and allow themselves to be used to pass along fraudulent or self-serving information.

Isaacs acknowledges that there are some solid reasons in many instances

for protecting sources. People whose jobs, property or lives might be endangered if their identities were known often need the guarantee of confidentiality before they will speak out.[13] Isaacs warns, though, that to stretch this anonymity to every political figure who leaks self-serving stories or to people who have axes to grind, is not only unprofessional and unethical, but immoral.

To reduce abuses in the granting of source confidentiality, Isaacs suggests that no grant of anonymity be given without the direct approval of the top editorial officer at the newspaper or broadcast station.[14] He further suggests the same principle be communicated to the major wire services and, by implication, the major radio and television networks.

Research concerning the public's views on the use of anonymous sources tends to refute some of the arguments by press critics that the apparently growing public distrust of the press is due, in part, to the overuse of anonymous sources. In general, John Adams finds audience members give fairly high credibility ratings to unnamed sources.[15] If the sources are connected to some "official" organization or to some "governmental" agency or officer, they are judged most credible, though. If the sources appear to be probably the reporter(i.e. "it was learned" or "indications are"), they are judged least credible.

Adams also finds that, in general, the subject matter of a story and the attitudes, prior knowledge and pre-dispositions of readers/viewers toward

the subject matter play a more significant role in determining how credible a story is judged than does the source of the information.[16]

Culbertson and Somerick find that generally most people recognize the "cloaking" of sources in stories and think the practice is acceptable.[17] A Gallup Poll finds that 83% of the people surveyed felt it was probably necessary for reporters to conceal the sources of their information sometimes and only 13% felt reporters should always reveal their sources.[18]

Fedler and Counts find that people perceive a story to be most accurate and fair when, in a story dealing with a controversial subject, no source is quoted as opposed to quoting an unnamed source, a named source or two opposing named sources.[19] For non-controversial stories, the completeness or incompleteness of source identification does not seem to make any significant differences concerning perceived accuracy or fairness.

The use of anonymous sources is apparently fairly common, especially in stories concerning government.[20] Stephen Hess finds that Washington D.C. reporters say approximately 28% of their interviews are "off-the-record."[21] About 71% of the reporters feel the public gains valuable information from the use of anonymous sources, but 17% say the public loses.

Hess also finds that about 13% of quotations in newspapers and 8% of quotations on network news broadcasts are not attributed to a named source. Front page stories and stories about foreign policy contain the greatest number of anonymous sources.

Culbertson finds that between 70%-75% of "Time" and "Newsweek" stories

contain such sources and about 33% of newspaper stories do so.[22] Some of the typical words used to label anonymous sources were "official, spokesman, source, member, observer, expert, aide, critic, adviser, staffer, researcher, investigator and analyst."

In an analysis of stories dealing with social issues in eight, large daily newspapers, Michael Ryan reports that 61% of all sentences had no attribution and over 10% of all sentences which contained opinions, inferences or judgments had no attribution.[23] Ryan says news reports should be based on verifiable facts properly attributed to qualified sources.

Generally, journalists tend to agree with Ryan and they have been found to support accepted professional codes of ethics and responsibility and to perform their jobs in a "professional" manner.[24] Editors have expressed some ambivalence concerning the use of anonymous sources, though.[25] They say the practice is often a necessary evil, but that close to 60% of the stories which have used such sources could probably have used "on-the-record" comments had reporters pressed for them.[26]

The National News Council conducted an extensive examination of the entire Janet Cooke/"Washington Post" incident and in conjunction with the study, surveyed over 30 newspaper editors across the United States. The council finds that newspapers are generally tightening procedures regarding the use of anonymous sources, requiring that at least one editor know the identity of any confidential source, providing as much identification about a source as possible even if his name is concealed and explaining to readers why a source is granted confidentiality.[27] The council condemns the

overuse of anonymous sources and suggests editors be more diligent in their control and supervision of reporters.

Research Questions

In order to add to the body of knowledge concerning the use of unnamed sources and unattributed information in news stories and to measure the effects of the Janet Cooke/"Washington Post" incident on the news media, a survey of newspaper editors and television news directors was conducted during December-February, 1981-82. The following primary research questions were addressed:

1. How many newspapers and television stations have formal, written policies concerning the use of anonymous sources?

2. How many media organizations have informal policies concerning the use of anonymous sources?

3. What are the basic elements of media policies concerning the use of anonymous sources?

4. What have been the effects of the Janet Cooke/"Washington Post" case concerning the use of anonymous sources and related ethical issues?

5. What have been the effects of the Janet Cooke/"Washington Post" case on the news media in general?

Secondary research questions covered the frequency of news media observance of the following practices:

1. Identifying stories which contain reporter opinion, commentary or analysis.

2. Giving individuals who are charged with misconduct an opportunity to respond to the charges.

3. Invading a person's privacy without sure warrant of the public's right to know.

4. Correcting promptly any mistakes of fact.

5. Checking on the accuracy of stories reported by less experienced staffers.

6. Checking on the accuracy of stories reported by more experienced staffers.

7. Using anonymous sources.

8. Honoring pledges of confidentiality to sources.

9. Requiring that editors know the identity of confidential sources.

10. Checking the academic credentials of prospective employees.

11. Checking the professional credentials of prospective employees.

12. Using composite characters in stories.

13. Encouraging participation in journalistic contests.

Differences between newspapers and television stations on all the variables were also desired as were differences among ABC, CBS and NBC stations and stations in various market-size categories(1-15, 16-35, 36-50).

Methods

The survey instrument was designed after extensive consultation with professional journalists and journalism educators. It initially contained 50 questions, but was reduced to 35 questions after a pre-test with 10 news media executives was conducted. Some questions were open-end, some required a "yes/no" indication and others asked for a frequency determination ranging from "always to never."

In early December, 1981, questionnaires were mailed to the editors of the 100 largest newspapers(by circulation) in the United States and to a randomly drawn sample of 50 editors from newspapers in state capitals.[28] In addition, questionnaires were mailed to the news directors of network-affiliated television stations in the 50 largest broadcast areas.[29]

A cover letter and a stamped, self-addressed return envelope accompanied each questionnaire. In the cover letter, the following definition of the "use of unnamed sources and unattributed information" was given:

> ...the reporting of opinion, speculation or alleged "facts" without citing the source of the information by name. By our definition, such identification techniques as "an informed source," "a spokesman for the mayor" and "a reliable source," plus speculative phrases as "it is believed," "it is reported" and "it is alleged" would be examples of using unnamed sources and unattributed information.

In late January, 1982, a reminder letter was sent to the editors and news directors. In all, 134 questionnaires were returned(45% return rate), but five were not completed, so only 129 were used in the final

analysis--65 from newspapers and 64 from television stations.

Responses were key punched on standard IBM 80-column computer cards. Analyses were conducted using standard SPSS computer techniques--frequencies, crosstabulations and correlations.

Findings

(Policies)

About 24% of the newspapers and television stations reported they had formal, written policies regarding the use of anonymous sources in stories. About 71% of the media organizations reported they had informal, oral policies regarding such use. (See Table 1) More newspapers than television stations had formal policies.

About 5% of the media organizations indicated they had both written and oral policies; 19% had a written policy, but no oral policy; 66% had an oral policy, but no written policy; and about 10% had neither written nor oral policies. The correlation between written and oral policies was highly negative. (Pearson $r=-.6316$, $p < .001$)

(Policy Elements)

The major elements of the policies included: (1)Editors must be informed of the names of sources, (2)Use anonymous sources as a last resort only; (3)Get other sources to verify information provided by anonymous sources; (4)Describe anonymous sources as much as possible to allow audience to assess credibility; (5)Grant confidentiality only to protect a source's life, liberty, property or profession; (6)Prohibit personal attacks by anonymous sources; (7)Trust the "professionalism" of reporters; (8)Prohibit

use of anonymous sources; and (9)Use only when sources represent official, government organizations. (See Table 2) More newspapers than television stations demanded that editors know the identity of confidential sources, used anonymous sources as a last resort only and described anonymous sources as fully as possible.

(Cooke Case Effects on Policies)

The news executives reported that the most pronounced effect of the Janet Cooke/"Washington Post" case on their policies in general was that they were now scrutinizing with more care stories which use unnamed sources and unattributed information in order to ensure accuracy and to justify the use of such sources and information. (See Table 3) Other effects included greater demands that reporters reveal the names of confidential sources to editors, more thorough checking of professional and academic credentials of prospective employees, identifying anonymous sources as completely as possible short of disclosing names and either restating or developing policies governing the use of anonymous sources.

About 43% of the respondents indicated that the Janet Cooke/"Washington Post" case had had no real effect on their news gathering and reporting activities.

Newspapers more than television stations had created policies and demanded that editors be told the identities of confidential sources.

(Cooke Case Effects on News Media in General)

About 73% of the news executives thought the Janet Cooke/"Washington Post" case had somewhat diminished the credibility of the media and about 10% thought the incident had greatly diminished media credibility. About 71% of the respondents reported the case had probably caused the news media to be more conscious of the accuracy of information obtained from confidential sources. (See Table 4) About 7% of the respondents thought the incident had had no effect on professional journalism or journalists.

Television news executives thought the Janet Cooke/"Washington Post" case had had less of an effect on journalism and journalists than did newspaper editors.

(Secondary Research Questions)

In the secondary research areas, 80% of the news executives indicated their newspapers or stations always clearly identified stories which contain reporter opinion, commentary or analysis. (See Table 5) About 75% said they did not print or broadcast attacks on a person's character without giving the person a chance to respond to the charges.

About 65% said they never invaded a person's privacy unless the invasion was warranted by the public's right to know. About 80% reported they always made prompt and complete corrections of factual mistakes in stories.

About 67% said they regularly checked on the accuracy of stories

written by inexperienced reporters, but only 41% indicated the same degree of checking on stories written by veteran reporters. Most media organizations followed a regular pattern of checking or not checking on the accuracy of their news stories regardless of the experience of the reporter involved. (Pearson r=.7440, $p < .001$)

About 77% of the respondents indicated they rarely, if ever, used unnamed sources in stories, but 88% said they honored pledges of confidentiality to sources whenever given. About 64% said they always required reporters to reveal the names of confidential sources to editors.

About 61% indicated they regularly checked the academic credentials of prospective employees, but 93% said they regularly checked the professional credentials of prospective employees. Most of the media organizations followed a more or less consistent pattern of checking on both the academic and the professional credentials. (Pearson r=.3859, $p < .001$)

About 94% of the news executives said they rarely used composite characters in news stories. About 67% indicated they regularly encouraged reporters to enter journalistic contests.

Statistically significant differences between newspapers and television stations were found in four general areas. Newspapers promptly corrected their mistakes more regularly than did television stations and more regularly required reporters to reveal the names of sources to editors. Television stations more regularly checked on the accuracy of stories and more regularly refused to invade a person's privacy without just cause.

(Differences By Network Affiliation and Market Size)

Only one statistically significant difference was found among ABC, CBS and NBC stations. Policies on anonymous sources at CBS stations more often included describing such sources as completely as possible.

Only two statistically significant differences were found among stations in the top 15 markets, markets 16-35 and markets 36-50. Policies on anonymous sources at stations in markets 16-35 more often required that editors know the names of such sources and policies at stations in the top 15 markets more often required that such sources be used only as a last resort.

Discussion

(Summary)

Despite a great deal of recent criticism over the unprofessional and misleading use of anonymous sources, in this study of the country's largest newspapers and television stations, only about a quarter indicated that they had formal policies concerning the use of such sources in stories. About 90% had either or both a formal or informal policy, though. More newspapers than television stations had formal policies.

Most policies stressed that anonymous sources should be used with great care, that editors had to be told the identities of such sources and that confidentiality was granted only as a last resort to protect the life, property or profession of a source. Verification of the information obtained from unnamed sources was also stressed. Newspaper policies more often than television policies demanded that editors know the names of sources, that anonymity be granted only as a last resort and that anonymous sources be described as fully as possible.

About 43% of the news executives thought the Janet Cooke/"Washington Post" case and similar incidents had had no effect on the policies of their news organizations. The remaining 57% indicated the biggest effects had been in prompting them to scrutinize more carefully the accuracy of information obtained from anonymous sources, to demand that editors know the names of such sources and to check more thoroughly the academic and professional credentials of prospective employees. Newspapers more often than television stations had developed new policies regarding anonymous sources and demanded that editors know the identities of such sources.

Almost 75% of the news executives thought the Janet Cooke/"Washington Post" case had diminished the credibility of the news media at least somewhat, but about 70% indicated that the news media would likely be more careful now about verifying information obtained from anonymous sources. Television news executives felt the Cooke case had had less of an effect than did newspaper executives.

The news media organizations regularly identified stories which contained reporter opinion or analysis, gave individuals charged with misconduct an opportunity to respond to the charges, refused to invade a person's privacy without just cause, promptly corrected factual mistakes, honored pledges of confidentiality, required that editors know the identities of persons granted confidentiality, checked the accuracy of rookie reporters' stories, checked the academic and professional credentials of prospective employees and encouraged reporters to enter journalistic contests.

The executives said their organizations less regularly checked the accuracy of veteran reporters' stories and rarely used anonymous sources or composite characters in stories. Newspapers corrected mistakes and demanded that editors know the names of confidential sources more regularly than did television stations. Television stations checked the accuracy of stories and refused to invade a person's privacy without just cause(public's right to know) more regularly than did newspapers.

There were few statistically significant differences between newspapers and television stations. The two media were pretty much alike in their policies and practices concerning anonymous sources and related ethical questions.

There were also few statistically significant differences among ABC, CBS and NBC affiliates or among stations in various market-size categories. Apparently, stations in the top 50 markets are also pretty much alike in their policies and practices, too.

(Explanation of Differences)

Most of the differences betweeen newspapers and television stations can likely be explained by the differences in the two media concerning the extensiveness of news coverage, the "investigativeness" of the news gathering and reporting activities, the demands for "pictures" and other visual enhancements and the years of experience of reporters. It is also likely that newspapers felt more effects from the Janet Cooke/"Washington Post" incident, because it involved one of their own.

(Limitations/Suggestions)

A larger sample would enhance the representativeness of the findings. Future research might survey smaller daily newspapers and television stations and possibly even weekly newspapers.

Actual content analyses of newspaper and television news stories would also complement the self-report data on the frequency of the use of anonymous sources, since the executives reported rare use of such sources, but research tends to refute their claims. In addition, it would be useful to discover the specific criteria used to determine when to grant confidentiality to a source and the policies of local newspapers and television stations concerning the wire service or network stories which contain information obtained from anonymous sources.

Despite its limitations, this study does contribute to the body of knowledge concerning the use of unnamed sources and unattributed information in news stories reported by the largest daily newspapers and television stations in the United States. This study also contributes to the knowledge of the effects of the Janet Cooke/"Washington Post" incident on the policies and practices of those same newspapers and television stations.

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TABLE 1[a]

Media Organizations That Have Policies Concerning the Use of Anonymous Sources in News Stories in Percent by Media

TYPE OF POLICY	ALL MEDIA (N=129)	NEWSPAPER (65)	TV (64)	AFFILIATION ABC (20)	CBS (20)	NBC (23)	MARKET SIZE 1-15 (20)	16-35 (21)	36-50 (23)
Formal/Written	24	32	16*	15	15	17	25	14	9
Informal/Oral	71	69	72	80	70	65	70	76	70

* $p < .05$

[a] Statistical significance of differences determined by chi-square procedures on all variables reported in tables 1-5.

TABLE 2

Media Organization Policy Elements Concerning the Use of Anonymous Sources in Percent by Media

POLICY ELEMENT	ALL MEDIA (N=129	NEWSPAPER (65)	TV (64)	AFFILIATION ABC (20)	CBS (20)	NBC (23)	MARKET SIZE 1-15 (20)	16-35 (21)	36-50 (23)
Editors Must Know Names of Sources	87	86	48*	30	65	48	50	67	30*
Use As A Last Resort	68	70	36*	40	40	30	60	24	26*
Verify Information	52	40	41	40	50	35	50	43	30
Describe Source Fully	21	28	14*	0	30	9*	15	14	13
Use To Protect Source	14	17	11	5	10	17	10	10	13
No Personal Attacks Allowed	13	17	9	10	20	0	20	10	0
Trust Reporters' Judgment	8	6	9	20	10	0	15	5	9
Forbid Use	5	5	5	10	0	4	5	0	9
Use Only If "Official"	3	3	3	5	5	0	5	0	4

* $p < .05$

TABLE 3

Perceived Effects of Janet Cooke/"Washington Post" Case on Media Organization Policies in Percent by Media

EFFECTS	ALL MEDIA (N=129)	NEWSPAPER (65)	TV (64)	AFFILIATION ABC (20)	AFFILIATION CBS (20)	AFFILIATION NBC (23)	MARKET SIZE 1-15 (20)	MARKET SIZE 16-35 (21)	MARKET SIZE 36-50 (23)
No Effect	43	35	50	55	40	52	45	52	52
Scrutinize Stories More	40	46	34	30	40	35	45	33	26
Reveal Names of Sources To Editors	32	40	23*	15	35	17	25	33	13
Check Professional Credentials More	24	31	19	15	25	17	15	29	13
Check Academic Credentials More	23	31	16	10	25	13	5	29	13
Identify Sources More Fully	19	20	19	15	25	13	25	14	17
Restate A Policy	10	12	8	5	5	13	10	10	4
Create A Policy	7	12	2*	0	0	4	0	0	4

* $p < .05$

sources
25-25-25

TABLE 4

Perceived Effects of Janet Cooke/"Washington Post" Case on Mass Media in Percent By Media

EFFECTS	ALL MEDIA (N=129)	NEWSPAPER (65)	TV (64)	AFFILIATION ABC (20)	CBS (20)	NBC (23)	MARKET SIZE 1-15 (20)	16-35 (21)	36-50 (23)
Diminished Credibility Somewhat	73	80	66	65	65	70	60	71	65
Diminished Credibility Greatly	10	12	8	10	5	9	15	10	0
Prompted More Attention To Accuracy	71	74	69	60	75	70	65	76	65
No Effect	7	2	13*	15	10	9	10	14	13

* $p < .05$

sources
26-26-26

TABLE 5

Frequency of Media Organization Observance of Selected Practices in Percent By Media

PRACTICES	ALL MEDIA (N=129)	NEWSPAPER	TV	AFFILIATION ABC (20)	AFFILIATION CBS (20)	AFFILIATION NBC (23)	MARKET SIZE 1-15 (20)	MARKET SIZE 16-35 (21)	MARKET SIZE 36-50 (23)
Identify Stories Containing Reporter Opinion									
Always	80	75	84	80	79	91	85	81	86
Most Times	18	22	14	20	16	9	15	14	14
Average	2	3	2	0	5	0	0	5	0
Rarely	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Never	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Give Persons Charged With Misconduct An Opportunity To Respond to Charges									
Always	75	73	76	70	74	87	65	90	73
Most Times	23	24	22	30	21	13	30	10	27
Average	1	2	2	0	5	0	5	0	0
Rarely	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Never	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

continued....

sources
27-27-27

TABLE 5(cont.)

PRACTICES	ALL MEDIA	NEWSPAPER	TV	ABC	CBS	NBC	1-15	16-35	36-50
Refuse To Invade A Person's Privacy Without Good Cause									
Always	65	54	76*	68	80	77	95	71	64
Most Times	32	42	23	32	15	23	5	29	32
Average	3	4	1	0	5	0	0	0	4
Rarely	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Never	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Correct Mistakes Promptly									
Always	80	89	70*	74	65	74	63	71	74
Most Times	17	11	24	21	30	17	32	19	22
Average	2	0	5	5	5	5	5	5	4
Rarely	1	0	1	0	0	4	0	5	0
Never	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Check Accuracy of Rookie Reporters' Stories									
Always	20	10	30*	25	40	26	35	19	35
Most Times	47	46	48	55	30	61	45	62	39
Average	14	16	13	10	20	9	10	9	17
Rarely	18	26	9	10	10	4	10	10	9
Never	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

* $p < .05$

continued...

TABLE 5(cont.)

PRACTICES	ALL MEDIA	NEWSPAPER	TV	ABC	CBS	NBC	1-15	16-35	36-50
Check Accuracy of Veteran Reporters' Stories									
Always	14	8	19	15	35	9	30	5	21
Most Times	27	23	31	40	20	35	35	24	35
Average	21	23	19	20	20	17	20	28	9
Rarely	35	39	31	25	25	39	15	43	35
Never	3	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Use Anonymous Sources In News Stories									
Always	2	1	3	5	0	4	0	4	4
Most Times	2	0	3	10	0	0	5	5	0
Average	19	20	19	15	25	18	20	24	18
Rarely	75	76	73	70	75	74	75	67	78
Never	2	3	2	0	0	4	0	0	4
Honor Pledges Of Confidentiality									
Always	88	89	87	95	75	91	79	95	87
Most Times	10	8	11	5	25	5	21	0	3
Average	2	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Rarely	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Never	0	0	1	0	0	4	0	5	0

continued...

sources
29-29-29

TABLE 5(cont.)

PRACTICES	ALL MEDIA	NEWSPAPERS	TV	ABC	CBS	NBC	1-15	16-35	36-50
Require That Editors Know the Identity of Confidential Sources									
Always	64	79	48*	58	35	55	53	52	41
Most Times	16	14	18	16	25	9	16	19	18
Average	11	5	18	11	25	18	21	14	18
Rarely	7	2	11	10	5	18	5	10	18
Never	2	0	5	5	10	0	5	5	5
Check the Academic Credentials of Prospective Employees									
Always	32	36	29	32	30	26	37	19	30
Most Times	29	25	33	26	40	35	26	33	39
Average	17	19	16	21	15	13	11	29	9
Rarely	20	20	19	11	15	26	26	14	18
Never	12	0	3	10	0	0	0	5	4
Check the Professional Credentials of Prospective Employees									
Always	69	66	71	68	70	74	74	76	65
Most Times	24	23	25	32	25	22	26	24	26
Average	4	6	2	0	0	4	0	0	5
Rarely	3	5	2	0	5	0	0	0	4
Never	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

* $p < .05$

continued...

sources
30-30-30

TABLE 5(cont.)

PRACTICES	ALL MEDIA	NEWSPAPER	TV	ABC	CBS	NBC	1-15	16-35	36-50
Use Composite Characters In News Stories									
Always	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Most Times	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Average	6	3	10	11	10	9	5	10	14
Rarely	14	13	15	6	20	18	11	30	5
Never	80	84	75	83	70	73	84	60	81
Encourage Reporters To Enter Journalistic Contests									
Always	37	32	42	40	37	45	55	38	33
Most Times	30	35	24	30	32	14	15	19	38
Average	22	22	23	25	21	23	25	29	14
Rarely	10	11	10	5	5	18	5	14	10
Never	1	0	1	0	5	0	0	0	5